

# FORCIBLE RAPE

## DEFINITION

Forcible rape, as defined in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, is the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Assaults or attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force are also included; however, statutory rape (without force) and other sex offenses are excluded.

TREND		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of offenses</i>	<i>Rate per 100,000 inhabitants</i>
1997	96,153	35.9
1998	93,103	34.4
Percent change	-3.2	-4.2

Law enforcement agencies received reports of an estimated 93,103 forcible rapes nationwide in 1998, representing the sixth consecutive annual decrease. The 1998 total shows a decline of 3 percent from the 1997 level. The 1998 count registered 9 percent below the 1994 level, and a decrease of 1 percent from 1989.

The South, the most populous area, accounted for the highest percent of the rape total, 39 percent. The Midwest and the West accounted for 25 and 23 percent, respectively, and the Northeast, 13 percent. Two-year trends for forcible rapes indicated a 4-percent decrease in the South and a 3-percent decline in the Northeast. Both the Midwest and West noted a decrease of 2 percent. (See Tables 3 and 4.)

The highest number of forcible rapes occurred in July. The fewest number was reported during the month of December. (See Table 2.18.)

Table 2.18

#### Forcible Rape by Month

Percent distribution, 1994-1998

Months	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
January	7.5	7.7	7.9	7.9	7.9
February	7.3	7.1	7.9	7.0	7.5
March	8.3	8.5	8.1	8.0	8.7
April	8.4	8.0	8.1	8.2	8.2
May	8.9	8.9	9.0	9.1	8.9
June	9.2	8.5	8.8	9.5	8.7
July	9.7	9.4	9.5	9.7	9.5
August	9.6	9.9	9.1	9.4	9.3
September	8.7	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.9
October	8.5	8.7	8.5	8.2	7.9
November	7.3	7.8	7.4	7.4	7.7
December	6.5	6.9	6.9	6.7	7.0

## Rate

The victims of rape are always female by the Uniform Crime Reporting definition. An estimated 67 of every 100,000 females in the country were reported rape victims in 1998. Compared to the 1997 rate, the 1998 rate for forcible rape of females decreased 4 percent; and compared to the 1994 rate, the decline was 13 percent.

The highest rate for forcible rape in 1998 was recorded in the Nation's metropolitan areas, where victims numbered 71 per 100,000 females. A rate of 70 per 100,000 females was recorded outside metropolitan areas, and a rate of 45 per 100,000 females in rural counties. Although the metropolitan areas record the highest rate for rape, only metropolitan areas have experienced a rate decline over the past 10 years (1989-1998), 14 percent. Cities outside metropolitan areas and rural counties experienced increases of 32 and 10 percent, respectively, for this same 10-year timeframe.

The Southern States recorded the highest rate for forcible rape, 75 victims per 100,000 females. Following were the Midwestern States with a rate of 72; the Western States, 69; and the Northeastern States, 46. The South recorded a rate decrease of 5 percent when compared to 1997 rates, while both the Northeast and West registered a 4-percent decline. The rate in the Midwest dropped 3 percent.

All four regions recorded declines in female forcible rape rate over the last 10 years. The largest decrease, 17 percent, was reported by the West. The Northeast showed a 16-percent decrease. The Southern region recorded a 6-percent decline for the same timeframe. The smallest decrease, 5 percent, was recorded in the Midwest.

## Nature

The highest percentage of rape offenses are those committed by force, which accounted for 89 percent of rapes reported in 1998. Attempts or assaults to commit forcible rape accounted for the remaining 11 percent. When compared to the 1997 volume, the number of rapes by force in 1998 decreased by 4 percent. A 9-percent decrease in attempts to rape was noted nationwide.

## Law Enforcement Response

Half of the forcible rapes reported to the Nation's law enforcement were cleared by arrest or exceptional means during 1998. Law enforcement in cities, suburban counties, and rural counties each reported clearances rates of 50 percent. (See Table 25.)

In 1998, by geographic region, forcible rape clearance rates were 54 percent in both the South and in the Northeast, 46 percent in the Midwest, and 44 percent in the West. (See Table 26.)

Nationally, 11 percent of the total clearances for forcible rape involved only juveniles (persons under 18 years of age). The percentage of juvenile involvement varied by community type, ranging from 11 percent in the Nation's cities collectively to 14 percent in rural counties. Cities with populations under 10,000 experienced the greatest juvenile involvement, 16 percent. (See Table 28.)

In 1998, participating law enforcement agencies throughout the Nation made an estimated 31,070 arrests for forcible rape. Of those forcible rape arrestees, 45 percent were under age 25, and 60 percent of those arrested were white. (See Tables 29, 41, and 43.)

A 1-percent decrease in the national arrest total for forcible rape was registered in 1998, compared to totals from 1997. Arrests in the Nation's cities collectively increased by 1 percent, while arrests in the suburban counties declined by 5 percent. A 7-percent drop in arrests for forcible rape was recorded in the rural counties. (See Tables 36, 44, 50, and 56.)

**Figure 2.7** **Forcible Rape**  
Percent Change from 1994

